

interests when no great interest of the church was at stake on the other side. No unbiased student of the Middle Ages has been convinced that, in truth and justice, the work of the medi-aeval church could be thus summed up. The one consistent effort of the church was to establish papal authority. Its greatest crime was obscurantism, which was war on knowledge and civilization.

This nothing can palliate or offset.

229. The English church and the mores. The church, however, from 1000 A.D. on was a machine of societal selection, and it pursued its work, suggesting and administering a work of that kind, grand results of which have come down to us in the civilization we have inherited. Our work largely consists in rational efforts to eliminate the elements which the church introduced.

In some respects the history of clerical celibacy in England best illustrates the mores. In the sixteenth century the rule and usage of the church had inculcated, as a deep popular prejudice, the notion that a priest could not be married. Cranmer, in ordering a visitation, directed investigation "whether any do condemn married priests, and for that they be married will not receive the communion or other sacrament at their hands." ¹

This prejudice very slowly died out, but it did die out and the popular judgment • favored and required clerical marriage. In the nineteenth century popular judgment rose in condemnation of fox-hunting parsons, and also of pluralists, and it has caused reforms and the disappearance of those classes.

230. The selection of sacerdotal celibacy. If it had not been for sacerdotal celibacy, there would have been ecclesiastical feudalization and the ecclesiastical benefices would have become hereditary. The children of priests inherited benefices and

intermarried
so long as the marriage of priests was allowed.
There would
have been a priestly caste.² The church as an
institution would
have been greatly modified. The consequences we
cannot imagine.
If Hildebrand and the other eleventh-century
leaders foresaw the
effect, it was statesmanship on their part to
establish the celibacy
of the clergy. , That institution has molded the
priesthood and
the mores of all who have adhered to the mediaeval
church. The

¹ Lea, *Sac. Celib.*, 488.

² *Ibid.*, 1,50.